

Message Text

SECRET

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51

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----- 014070

R 090903 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2002

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMCONSUL ASMARA

CINCEUR

SECDEF

S E C R E T SANAA 786

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: QNON YS, ET, SO, PFOR

SUBJ: COMMENT ON US RESPONSE TO SOVIET THRUSTS IN
SOMALIA AND ADEN

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

SECDEF FOR ISA

FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY RUSH

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARIES SISCO AND NEWSOM

1. MY EARLY APRIL VISIT TO ETHIOPIA, DISCUSSIONS WHILE
THERE AND DURING LATE APRIL NEA CHIEFS OF MISSION
CONFERENCE IN TEHRAN HAVE LEFT ME CONCERNED AT WHAT
APPEARS IMBALANCE IN USG OVERALL RESPONSE TO SOVIET
THRUSTS IN SOMALIA AND PDY.

2. AS I SEE IT, AND STATED AT TEHRAN, RUSSIA'S
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HIGH IMPACT PROGRAMS IN ADEN AND SOMALIA, PARTICULARLY ITS INTENSIVE DELIVERIES OF UNNECESSARILY SOPHISTICATED AND DESTABILIZING MILITARY EQUIPMENT, AIR AT ACHIEVEMENT OF A CLASSIC AND LONG OPENLY ACKNOWLEDGED GEOPOLITICAL OBJECTIVE OF THE RUSSIAN STATE: CONTROL OVER STRAITS OF BAB AL MANDAB AND, BY EXTENSION, OVER RED SEA TRANSIT TRAFFIC. COULD NOT BE MORE OBVIOUS THAT WHAT THE RUSSIANS ARE DOING IN SOMALIA AND ADEN ARE BUT DIFFERENT PRONGS OF A SINGLY AND PURPOSEFULLY TARGETED PINCERS MOVEMENT.

3. IN A SIDER CONTEXT, THIS SOVIET ACTIVITY ALMOST CERTAINLY RELATESTO ITS INCREASING HOLD IN IRAQ, WITH LARGER OBJECTIVE OF DEVELOPING CAPABILITY TO DISRUPT WESTERN ACCESS TO PENINSULA AND GULF OIL.

4. RETURNING TO SOUTHERNRED SEA ASPECT, I FEEL THERE IS A DISTURBING DISPARITY IN PATTERN OF USG RESPONSES ON THE TWO SHORES. IT WAS CONFIRMED AT TEHRAN THAT STRENGTHENING YAR IN ITS CONFRONTATION WITH COMMUNIST ADEN IS BEING GIVEN HIGH PRIORITY BY OUR GOVERNMENT. USG' S RESPONSE TO THIS SITUATION IS SHOWING REALISM, FLEXIBILITY AND VIGOR.

5. ON OUR APPROACH TO HELPING ETHIOPIA IN ITS PROBLEM WITH SOMALIA, ON THE OTHER HAND, I WAS SURPRISED DURING MY VISIT TO ADDIS TO LEARN THAT IT HAS BEEN AND APPARENTLY CONTINUES TO BE USG POLICY TO KEEP IEG ON SUCH A SHORT REIN IN TERMS OF MILITARY SUPPLY THAT IT NOW WELL BELOW PARITY IN INVENTORIES OF APC' S, TANKS AND PLANES VIS- A- VIS ITS SOVIET- SUPPLIED NEIGHBOR, LET ALONE IN POSITION MAKE A USEFUL MILITARY CONTRIBUTION TO HELP NORTH YEMEN AGAINST ADEN IN CASE OF A CRUNCH. IT SEEMED TO ME THAT, IN NOT RESPONDING MORE POSITIVELY TO IEG REQUIREMENTS, USG HAS (A) TREATED ITS MOST POPULOUS AND INFLUENTIAL ALLY IN EAST AFRICA WITH UNDUE COMPLACENCY, AND (B) FAILED TO CONCEIVE OF US POLICIES WITH OUR FRIENDS ON ADJACENT RED SEA SHORES AS PART OF A HARMONIZED, DYNAMIC RESPONSE TO A COORDINATED AND UNFORTUNATELY ALL TO DYNAMIC SOVIET THREAT.

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CRAWFORD

SECRET
NMAFVVZCZ

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** SECRET

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 MAY 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SANAA00786
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SANAA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730541/aaaaiqxv.tel
Line Count: 111
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08-Jan-2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <14-Jan-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> mcm 980122
Subject: COMMENT ON US RESPONSE TO SOVIET THRUSTS IN
TAGS: PFOR, n/a
To: SS
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005